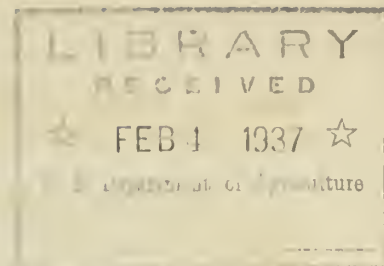


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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

The Hot Lunch Served at School

A dialogue between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Morse Salisbury, Radio Service, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Thursday, January 21, 1937.

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MR. SALISBURY: Now for our regular Thursday home economics feature. As usual Ruth Van Deman is here at the helm, or the wheel, or whatever it is. Ruth, what do you call the steering gear for the household machinery?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Don't believe it has a name, Morse. Well-regulated household machinery just runs by itself, you know, like clockwork.

MR. SALISBURY: With an occasional winding up and oiling.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, lots of oiling. Every good household manager has an inexhaustible supply of oil, guaranteed to prevent friction and lubricate any kind of a domestic hot-box.

But today I want to talk about something one step removed from the domestic scene, but still very much a part of it if there are children in the family. That's the school lunch, the hot lunch served on the school premises, for youngsters who live too far to come home for a noon meal.

Last Tuesday Mrs. Roosevelt told us at her press conference about two school lunchrooms she had visited this week in West Virginia. One for nursery children and one for grade school children. She described the hot meat and vegetable stew that was the main dish on the menu at one of the schools, and said how good it smelled. I'm not sure but what she tasted it too. Anyway nothing about that school lunch escaped her, even though in the back of her mind she was carrying plans for the inauguration festivities and all her engagements for the rest of this busy week here in Washington.

And I've been visiting school lunchrooms all over the country this week myself by means of the reports from home demonstration agents in the extension service. And I'm impressed again, as I always am when I read these reports, with the way these women get things done.

These school lunch stories bristle with statistics on the number of children served - hundreds and thousands of them - and the cost per lunch figured out to the hundredth of a cent.

In Minnesota, for instance, I remember, they told about very good lunches for less than 3 cents per serving. They got some of the supplies from the relief organization. They could do that because practically all of the children in that particular school were from families on relief. And the

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women up there in Blue Earth County, Minnesota, are very good organizers. Let me give you just a few of the high spots of their plan:

They had a committee of 10 women to plan the food. Then each committee member had a helper, making 20 in all. Each team of two worked only one day in two weeks. The general chairman saw to it that supplies were on hand when the women came to the school house at 10 o'clock, and the recipes for the day were on cards tacked up in the cupboard. They served from 18 to 27 children each day. The number varied because of a measles epidemic. The women had the tables all set when the children came down from the school room, and they got in some training in table manners as well as new ideas about food.

As the report put it. "We had a large variety. Some mothers could not understand why their children ate everything we offered them and enjoyed it, whereas at home they fussed over their food." Well, I guess we've all heard that story before.

That mention of the measles epidemic in Minnesota reminds me of the Virginia State report. They said that the hot school lunch helped children to get over the after-effects more quickly. The county school superintendent and the county health doctor both said that when the children came back to school, weak and listless after a very bad epidemic of measles that had closed some of the schools, the hot soup at noon was very beneficial.

And by the way, the vegetable mixture and the beef for this soup was put up in community canning centers by women from the parent-teacher associations and the school leagues. In Maryland and some other States also women get together and do community canning for the benefit of the school lunchroom.

In New York State, they've made a feature of planning gardens to supply winter vegetables for the school lunchroom - beets and carrots, and potatoes, and cabbage, and other kinds that could be stored and used as needed throughout the winter. Incidentally that teaches a lot about growing and storing vegetables as well as about the value of the different ones in the diet.

In Kansas they have a slogan for the school lunch campaign. They call it "Keep the school child growing."

In some places interest in the school lunch has started through poster contests. The children competed with each other in working out designs for posters for the school lunch bulletin board.

One community in Missouri got fathers as well as mothers stirred up to take a hand. I'm going to give you that story in the home demonstration agent's own words -

"The club members arranged for an evening meeting at the school, invited all the patrons, and succeeded in arousing enough interest among the men to secure their services for one day for partitioning a room in the basement to be used as a kitchen. An entertainment given at the school yielded the money for lumber and other supplies. The women donated kitchen utensils, dishes, and a small oil stove. And they also papered the walls of the kitchen, put up neat shelves for utensils and supplies, hung ruffled curtains at the two high

windows, and placed gay, red geraniums on the window ledges. A woman, provided through W.P.A. help, did the cooking, and the children passed the kitchen door each noon to get their servings of the hot dish."

MR. SALISBURY: Ruth, that mention of the oil stove reminds me of a jingle I read once in some State bulletin, I think it was.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Let's have it.

MR. SALISBURY: It went this way I think:

"Sing a song of Hot Lunch,
Potatoes on to boil
Four and twenty minutes
On our blue flame oil.
Make them nice and creamy,
Serve them while they're hot;
Don't you think that such a dish
Would help an awful lot?"

MISS VAN DEMAN: I know such a dish would help an awful lot. I still get cold chills when I think of those cold, dry sandwiches I used to choke down at noon recess. Thank fortune, times have changed.

To help along with the 1937 hot lunch program in small schools where equipment has to be very simple, and there isn't any too much cash to spend for food either, our bureau has worked out a series of menus and recipes.

The first part gives suggestions for serving inexpensive hot dishes to 50 children of the grammar school age. The recipes are for substantial soups, the kind that are almost a meal in themselves - and for egg dishes, and meat and vegetable combinations, that can be cooked on top of the stove.

The second part is for use in nursery schools. It gives two weeks' menus and recipes for a group of 25 nursery school children and 6 teachers.

MR. SALISBURY: These are all large quantity recipes then?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, for groups of 25 to 50 youngsters. The kind of recipes a teacher or a leader of the project uses in the school lunch kitchen.

MR. SALISBURY: Then they're not for the homemaker who packs a lunch box for one or two youngsters.

MISS VAN DEMAN: No, not at all. That's another kind of school lunch problem. This bulletin is one of the very few of our home economics bulletins that is not for the homemaker.

MR. SALISBURY: But you'll send it to any teacher or manager of a school lunchroom.

MISS VAN DEMAN: That's right. The exact title is "Menus and Recipes for Lunches at School."

MR. SALISBURY: And I might add that this bulletin called "Menus and Recipes for Lunches at School" has a most attractive cover, with pictures of children of all ages eating lunches in school lunchrooms.

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